

Engravers goof, and up pops the 'big D'

By Roger Boye

THE QUESTIONS in today's column concern errors in the designs of coins and currency.

● Q.—My parents saved several half-dollars dated 1952, the year my brother was born. The coins were minted in Denver, and most are uncirculated.

When we examined the coins a few days ago, we noticed the "D" mint mark is larger on some coins than on others. Does this mean we have something special? —J. D., Chicago.

A.—Some engravers at the United States Mint have used the wrong-size punch when they stamped the mint mark into the die. [The die is a piece of hard metal engraved with the design of the coin and used to produce the coins.]

This usually resulted in a mint mark which was substantially smaller than normal, tho some coins exist with exceedingly large-size mint marks. Presently, the Mint is using the same-size punch for mint marks on coins of all denominations, thus avoiding variations in size.

But the smaller-than-normal "D" mint mark was common in the early 1950s and earlier. In

Franklin half-dollars, the "micro 'D'" is known to exist on at least the 1948, 1950, 1952, and 1954 specimens. The 1952 variety sells for about \$6 in uncirculated condition, \$2 more than a normal-size "D" specimen in the same condition.

Incidentally, the mint mark on the Franklin half-dollar is on the reverse, just below the letter "E" in the word "STATES."

● Q.—Recently I came across a 1934-A \$10 Federal Reserve note. The serial number covers much of the signature of W. A. Julian, treasurer of the U. S. I'm wondering if it has any value—J. W., Dolton.

A.—Yes, to a collector of currency with printing errors. The more pronounced the error [the greater the overlap], the greater the value of your bill.

Uncirculated \$10 bills of series 1934-A sell for \$25 to \$35, depending on the issuing Federal Reserve bank. Assuming your note is uncirculated, it would be worth at least \$10 more than these prices for "normal" 1934-A \$10 bills.

Questions about coins and collecting? Send them to me, in care of room 414, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Av., Chicago, Ill. 60611. But, please, do not send coins.